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SHORT STORIES OF THE BUSINESS WORLD

The Striped Tourists

By MONTAGUE GLASS.

Abbe Potash of Potash & Perlmutter, jobbers and wholesalers of ladies' cloaks and suits, stood in front of his store, ready and willing to greet customers, none came. Instead, Luis Mintz, manufacturers' drummer, rushed across the street, dodging two trolley cars and an automobile in his progress, and grasped him warmly by the hand.

Now, Louis' lay was sympathy, and he made haste to put it in practice with Abbe Potash.

"Well, Abe, my boy," he said, "you look like you'd struck the high and dry place between a failure and a five. What's the trouble?"

Abe disengaged his right hand from Louis' cordial embrace and backed away hurriedly.

"Please," he protested, "no jokes. Enough's enough. The last time you was here you made some fine jokes for Perlmutter, and we got them striped tourists' coats yet."

Louis looked grieved.
"Why, they're my best sellers, Abe. If I'd thought you was going to get stuck with them tourists I'd my eat 'em first."

"Eat 'em now," Abe suggested. "Tain't too late. They're all there, just where your expressman left them."

The troubled look on Louis' face grew almost agonizing in its intensity. "Now, that ain't no way, Abe," he grumbled. "Perlmutter bought them, and Perlmutter's your partner."

"My partner," Potash cried, and his bushy eyebrows elevated themselves so far that it seemed impossible for them to descend again without surgical assistance.

He seized Mintz by the coat and dragged him into the store.

"Come," he said eagerly, "I want you should hear some things. You shall judge it between us."

"Hold on, there, Abe," Louis cried, struggling to free himself. "That's a new suit."

"I'll buy you another," Abe said, releasing his grasp on the drummer's coat. "If you take back them tourists."

He led the way to the office in the rear.

"You ain't in no hurry, no," he commenced. "Then sit down. Here, have some cigars," he pulled a handful from his pocket. "Take 'em all; I don't smoke."

"Much obliged, Abe. What are you doing? Buying cigars for the drummers?"

"Me buy cigars for drummers?" Abe cried indignantly. "I catch myself. I don't buy no cigars for nobody. All such things, such nonsense, I leave for Perlmutter."

Louis lit one of the cigars and blew a great cloud of smoke.

"Where's Perlmutter now?" he asked. "Is he out?"

Potash laughed a hollow, mirthless guffaw.

"No, Louis," he replied. "Perlmutter ain't out. I am out. Abe Potash is out. Business ain't bad enough, Louis; collections ain't slow enough, Louis; sales ain't falling off enough, Louis; but that big fool, that crazy Perlmutter, he gets it into his head he must go off and get married."

Potash gained heat as he proceeded and punctuated each enough with a bang of his fist.

"Is Morris Perlmutter married?" Louis exclaimed.

"So sure as you smoke them cigars from his wedding," Potash said solemnly. "Perlmutter is married and away on his wedding tower. He got a have a tower, too, Louis. When I was married I had towers, too, you believe me, Louis. My wife and me, we don't know what towers is when we got married. But Perlmutter, he must have everything. Towers he must have, with Meyer Rothschild's daughter."

"Of Rothschild & Pollak?" Louis asked.

"That's them," Potash assented. "Rothschild & Pollak. You know 'em, Louis?"

Louis nodded.

"Then I don't have to tell you that Rothschild's a Pollak, but Pollak ain't no Rothschild, Louis, no siree. Pollak in one plain crook—two fires in Milwaukee and a failure in Toledo. Nice people they are, Louis, believe me."

"And where did Perlmutter go with his bride?" Louis inquired.

"Ask me where he goes?" Potash grunted. "Atlanta, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Old Point Comfort. When I was married I went with my Rosie to Old Point Comfort, Louis. Believe me, I was happy we could go to two rooms on Third street. But then I married a common sense girl, Louis; not so stylish, but a good cook, y' understand. I give you my word, Louis, we was by Rothschild's for dinner last week, and I thought I was poisoned. Perlmutter says Minnie Rothschild cooked that dinner all by herself. I don't know if he speaks the

truth or not, Louis—Perlmutter is such a liar you can't depend on him from one word to another—but if she did cook that dinner, Louis, then Perlmutter has as good as committed suicide."

Here Potash was interrupted by the postman's whistle.

"Don't go, Louis," he apologized. "I'll get them letters and come right back."

He returned a moment later with three letters.

Ain't that the funniest thing, Louis?" he said. "Here's three letters from Perlmutter, one from Atlanta, one from Baltimore and one from Philadelphia."

"Three of a kind," Louis commented. "No good to me, Louis," Potash murmured. "I might as well throw 'em in the discard."

He opened the letter from Atlanta first.

"I'll read it to you, Louis," he explained. "I ain't got no secrets from nobody."

He adjusted his glasses at the proper angle and commenced:

"Mr. A. Potash:

"Friend Abe—I trust this letter finds you well. The same I can assure you. Well, Abe, we are in Atlanta. Minnie thought we should go right through Atlanta and make Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia on our way back, as we can stay in Atlanta over Sunday and maybe do some business."

"A bluff," he snapped. "She cares a lot about business."

"Go ahead with your letter," said Louis, and Potash started in again.

"Well, Abe, I seen Mishkind this A. M. and he ain't buying no striped tourists."

"Sure not," Potash commented bitterly.

"He wants you should ship him by express duplicate order 1423. Only you should send 8 doz. lot 4989 instead of 4 as last month. Inclosed find Rablin's check for \$525. He says I should make it 1 off 33 days and 5 ex. But I told him that people what is such slow pay like him must ask no favors from nobody. Yours respectfully,

"MORRIS PERLMUTTER."

"P. S.—How's business in the store?" He folded the letter and threw it on the desk.

"Mawruss done well in getting that money, Louis. The boy done well."

Louis nodded again.

"He's a good boy, Louis, only a little wild. Maybe—I don't know—marriage makes a man out of him. What, Louis?"

"Maybe," Louis answered enigmatically.

"Well, here's the next," Abe said, and commenced to read the Baltimore letter.

"Mr. A. Potash:

"Friend Abe—Well, Abe, we had a good time in Atlanta and it is a good live town. We got to Balto this A. M. and Rosenberg said he ain't using no stripes."

"What did I tell you?" Abe cried.

"I inclose his order on separate sheet; \$1222.24 ain't so bad. Also order from Finkelbein \$840.75. Elenbogen & Klein \$940.80. We expect to see Kinsler this P. M. before leaving for Phila. Yours in haste,

M. PERLMUTTER."

"P. S.—I hope everything is O. K. in store."

Potash closed the letter with a smile.

"I tell you, Louis, when a young man grows up, like Mawruss, it's only right he should find a nice girl like Minnie Rothschild and get married. It gives him something to work for. Am I right or wrong, Louis?"

"Let's hear the next one," Louis said, and Abe opened the last letter.

"Mr. Abraham Potash. Philada.

"Friend Abe—Well, Abe, Finkelbein says you should double up on lot 4980. This makes his order \$1329. Ship at once. Stripes ain't no good in Philadelphia, too, Levy & Marcus, The Fair and Square Store, Herman Block, and M. Fishlowitz orders on the other side."

"Regards to all friends in store."

Home Sunday. Resp.

"M. PERLMUTTER."

"When a man's got a good live partner, Louis," Abe said, beaming, "business is always good, ain't it? I tell you, Louis, the only thing the matter with Mawruss was that he don't get married. If I say it once, I say it a thousand times, 'Mawruss, why ain't you got married? Be a man, Mawruss.' And he took my advice, Louis, and he's got a nice girl, a good girl, and a good cook, too. I give you my word, Minnie Rothschild, that's a good cook. Excuse me while I answer the phone."

He took down the receiver as the bell trilled impatiently.

"Hallo, hallo! Yes—this is Potash & Perlmutter. Yes—Oh, wie gehts, Mr. Pollak. How's Mr. Rothschild? That's good. Have we any striped tourists? I'll see."

He covered the transmitter with his hand, and winked solemnly at Louis. Then he resumed the telephone conversation.

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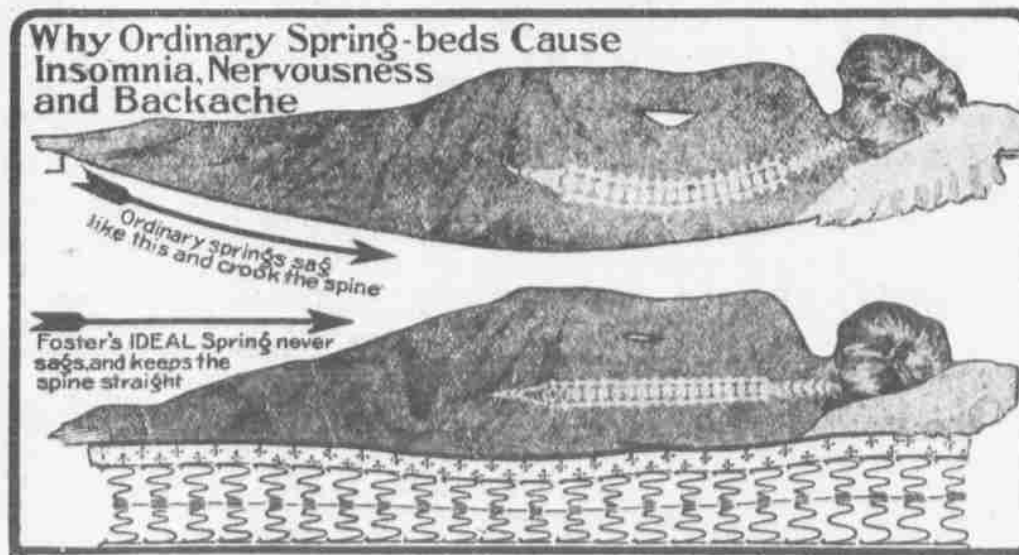
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He hung up the receiver with a profound sigh.

"Louis," he said earnestly, "that Mr. Pollak, that's one fine gentleman. Comes from fine people, y'understand, on the other side. That's a fine concern, Rothschild & Pollak; gilt edge A No. 1. You know Mr. Rothschild? That's Mawruss' father-in-law. Sure."

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